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Welcome to the Jungle: an aerial view of crowd gathered outside the sold-out Guns N' Roses Board of Education meeting.

LAUSD's Board of Education issued a stay of execution for the district's adult education programs today at a meeting that could almost pass as star-studded.

The event was so crowded that hundreds were barred from entering; they waited outside chanting "Save our Schools." Those who did make it inside to speak on behalf of adult ed and other programs on the chopping block included assorted Los Angeles-area city council members and mayors, several veterans of Iraq, a world-famous choreographer, and the drummer from Guns N' Roses.

The budget drama, which has built for weeks to today's crescendo, seemed almost too choreographed, leaving some to wonder if it was all political theater orchestrated by district officials to galvanize support for a [\\$270-a-year parcel tax proposed by LAUSD for the November ballot](#).

The board voted to postpone its decision on the 2012-13 budget, which would have eliminated funding for adult education, early education and arts education programs, but not before entertaining a parade of heartfelt appeals from individuals whose lives were changed by adult ed.

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There was the Black Hawk crew chief and Iraq veteran who dropped out of school at 17. "I began associating with the wrong sort of people, and it would not have been long before I ended up in serious trouble," he said. He credited the adult ed program with turning his life around.

There was the lady civil engineer who explained, "In engineering we say: Even the greatest structure will fall without a proper foundation. Adult education was my foundation." She has just been accepted into a PhD program at UCLA.

There was the Nigerian immigrant who came to America without a high school diploma, and got a job stuffing envelopes in downtown LA. He is now an adjunct professor at CSU Los Angeles. "Without adult education," he said, "I would still be stuffing envelopes today."

Other speakers took the tough love route: some threatening to vote board members out of a job, others going so far as to threaten the district with lawsuits.

"I wonder if you've given thought to the litigation you may be facing," asked Ana Maria Quintana, an attorney and City Council member from Bell, where construction on an adult occupational education center is only half-finished. "You have contractual obligations with that site. That building was provided with federal funds under the condition that that building be used solely for adult education."

The whole affair was capped off with a personal request to John Deasy from [Guns N' Roses drummer Matt Sorum](#) for a one-on-one talk about arts education funding. (Needless to say, the offer brought the superintendent to his [na-na-na-knees, knees](#).)

In the end, Board Member Steven Zimmer put forth an amendment that essentially kicks the budget back to Deasy, asking the superintendent and the unions to work together on internal cuts. Deasy has until March 8 to explore other options to balance the budget.

Before the amendment went to a vote though, Deasy took a moment to say a few words about the parcel tax that he and Board President Monica Garcia mentioned at every opportunity throughout the meeting. In something of a role-reversal, the superintendent asked for support from the same speakers who had just come before him.

Even if the governor's budget passes, Deasy said, LAUSD will not see the money it is owed by the state for years.

"Hence why we've been very clear that we need a short-term parcel tax to help us. If you had a parcel tax that was around \$298 paid once a year--less than a dollar a day--you could create some \$220 million," Deasy said. Paired with internal cuts of a similar magnitude, the superintendent believes that the parcel tax could make up the district's \$557 million budget shortfall.

"Sacramento can't take that one away. Sacramento cannot defer that one. Sacramento cannot cut that one," Deasy said of the parcel tax.

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